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B A C K G R O U N D I N F O R M A T I O N

July, 1951 No.2

(Note: This material is strictly confidential and is definitely not for publication.)

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II. Notes on the Church in Yugoslavia

III. Political and Religious Implications of the Division between East and West in Europe as seen in Austria

IV. New Pressures on the Church in Eastern Germany

V. Professor Hromadka in Berlin

VI. The Churches and the Peace Plebiscite in the Eastern Zone of Germany

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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I.
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHINA

(Note: The following review of new developments in China is based upon the most recent reliable reports available. From these reports we have tried to indicate the trend of developments as these are of concern to the Church throughout the world. We admit our incompetence in reporting on the recent developments in China. Not even those recently in China are willing to say much about the future. Assuming that we in the West can understand a little of what our fellow-Christians experience, what are we to do in the light of their experience which will be of the greatest help to them? Perhaps the least we can do is to help people in the West to remember certain elementary things about the situation in China; that they live in a situation of terrible ideological, physical and psychological pressure to conform to the totalitarian line, all the more effective because of the impossibility of having any contact with the outside world; that they live in a war situation in which the nations of the democratic West are the enemy; that they are a very small group in vast population which does not share their faith in Christ; that they are bearing to a considerable extent the burden of our sins for only slowly recognising the desire of the Chinese for national self-expression.)

1. The Political Situation

The general political picture in China is described as follows by a competent correspondent:

"All reports seem to agree that the most striking factor in the situation is the amazing degree of control which the new Government has already achieved in all walks of life and throughout the whole country. It is impossible to take Marx-Leninism with too much seriousness in interpreting the China scene. There are as yet no general evidences whatsoever of such Chinese modifications of it as those who have best understood China in the past have naturally anticipated.

As far as internal conditions are concerned, the new regine has definitely come to stay for the foreseeable future. Historically speaking there seems to have been no alternative. The new Government is making constantly greater achievements, at an increasing spiritual cost. The cost is freedom but for some time to come, freedom will remain a luxury in China, where the situation is radically different from that of the West. As of this spring, it has to be admitted that under the Central People's Government, the Chinese nation is gaining immeasurably in self-respect, in confidence, unity and strength. This is part of the new atmosphere, along with its grim concomitant, personal fear."

2. The Government and the Church in China

It is evident from the reports of experienced observers that the Christian Church in China, both Catholic and Protestant, while it is tolerated by the Government at the moment, is being brought under closer and closer control as time goes on. Systematic attention is being given to the extension of these

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controls, as is evidenced by the series of conferences under Government auspices held recently in Peking - one on Christian schools and colleges, another on Christian publishing agencies, and a third on the Protestant Churches as a whole. The latter was a conference to discuss matters relating to all Christian organisations which have been receiving subsidies from America. This was attended by over 150 representatives. Last December, regulations were issued by the Government regarding Church bodies coming under this specific category, which of course covers the larger part of the Christian Movement in China. The April conference was called to discuss these regulations, and formally to adopt relevant resolutions then agreed upon. The Government, however, used this opportunity, not only through its own spokesmen to illustrate ways in which imperialism has hitherto been rampant within the borders of the Church, but also to insist that Christians themselves publicly admit the truth of such accusations by indicting people by name.

A statement was issued from this conference of representatives of the various Protestant Christian Churches and organisations, which was addressed "To fellow Christians throughout China and throughout the whole world." The opening section declares opposition to American imperialism, to the use of atomic weapons, to the making of any unilateral peace with Japan, and to the rearming of Japan and of Western Germany. "We wish to unite with peace-loving Christians throughout the world in opposing all these ways in which American imperialism seeks to disrupt world peace". The document goes on to declare that imperialism has made consistent use of Christianity as a tool of its aggressive purposes. The resolution regarding the Korean war, adopted by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches meeting in Toronto is specifically cited, and a strong protest is made against this action, the voice of which is declared to be that of the State Department of the U.S.A. Government, while it is maintained that Dulles, as "A tool of Wall Street and an instigator of the Korean War" was behind it. The signatories also say that they wish to expose American plotting during the past hundred years to use the missionary movement in China for cultural aggression and espionage purposes. A further section proclaims thanks and enthusiastic support to the Government for the regulations which have been drawn up, giving as they do a great impetus to the independence movement among the Churches. "We are confident", they maintain, "that Chinese Christians in reliance upon God, and under the bold and enlightened leadership of Chairman Mao, with the encouragement and aid of the Government, can in their own strength alone establish Christian work which will be better, purer and more able to serve the people". They then solemnly declare that they are now definitely completely and forever, cutting off all connections with American and all other Mission Boards. They conclude by saying that all local Churches, Christian organisations and Christian publications must be enlisted in active participation in the "Resist America and Aid Korea Movement", in supporting World Peace Congress proposals for a Five-Power Peace Treaty, and in signing Patriotic Pacts. In their final pledges of support for Government policies and programme, they include assistance to the Government in exposing reactionaries within Christian organisations, and the promotion of a movement to indict imperialistic and corrupt reactionary elements.

In addition to these government-sponsored conferences, increased pressure is being brought to bear on Christian individuals and organisations to participate in the growing tide of nationalist propaganda. With individuals this frequently

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takes the form of pressure to sign such statements as the Citizens'Pact, which begins with pledges of support to Chairman Mao, the Communist Party, the Central People's Government and the People's Liberation Army. A Special Pact for Christians, apparently started through the efforts of the Roman Catholic Church, opens only with a pledge of support for the "Common Platform", but at some meetings both pacts, plus the Manifesto from the Peking meeting and resolutions supporting the Second World Peace Congress were all printed on one sheet so that in order to sign one it was necessary to agree to all.

It would appear that in promoting such propaganda and eliciting proofs of patriotism, the Government has paid more attention to Christians than to ordinary individuals probably because of the Western connections of the Church in China. Since it has been definitely stated by the Government that their religious freedom depends upon evidence of their patriotism, some Christians have been tempted to go very far to establish their loyalty to the regime. However, frequently the supposed sanction of individuals for certain actions and statements is secured through "inviting" them to attend meetings and later publishing lists of those present, thus implying that they were in agreement with everything which was said or done at the meeting.

As for foreign missionaries, it is believed that by the end of this year all who are not detained by the Government will have left China. Hundreds have already left, and many more are waiting for exit permits, which the Government is becoming increasingly slow in granting. Some missionaries are being held in prison, some have been formally sentenced, others have been subjected to public trials, while some of the trials have been held in comparative secrecy.

At the end of December, 1950, Chinese accounts in the United States and American accounts in China were frozen. This gave a further impetus to the movement which was already underway to make the Chinese Church self-supporting. Since Government regulations called for registration of all organisations dependent either wholly or in part upon American bodies,the majority of the national Christian bodies decided to stop receiving such funds immediately. This has put them in a very difficult position, because in the past there has been little emphasis upon support for national Christian organisations by local bodies, many of which were not themselves self-supporting.

This necessity for self-support will doubtless lead to the survival of only those institutions which are deemed essential to the future of the Chinese Church. The present crisis will also provide added impetus for the movement towards Christian unity, although the direction this will take is uncertain. Organisational unity, although resulting in increased strength, might lead to additional political pressure. There is a growing desire within the Chinese Church for a new theology, free from western influence and more in harmony with the teachings of the New Democracy. This has led to increased Bible study among Christians and the consciousness of the need for a greater understanding of their faith in the face of Marxism. In many areas church activity is restricted to one weekly service, while in many places church services were suspended during the period of land reform. In many cases Christian colleges have been taken over by the Government and made into national institutions. There is no news of theological colleges closing, and apparently they are being allowed to continue under the close supervision which is over all institutions.

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It is inevitable that the Chinese Church, at least in the foreseeable future, will be cut off almost completely from any contact with the outside world. From a Chinese point of view the ecumenical movement, appears to be almost exclusively western, and as a result all contacts with it are suspect. All connections with foreign mission boards have already been repudiated, and while this does not mean other Churches, practically speaking it amounts to the same thing. Few Chinese will want to take the risk of applying for exit visas which would probably be refused, and while the Chinese Premier has suggested that when the Church had "set its own house in order" it might invite suitable visitors from abroad, it is unlikely that any entry visas will be granted anytime in the near future, and probably any such visits would only cause increased suspicion and trouble for the Chinese Church. These developments, plus the complete censorship of the press, the fact that listening to the Voice of America broadcasts is considered as treason and the increasing censorship of correspondence, effectively cuts off Chinese Christians and the Chinese Church from contacts with their fellow Christians and churches in the West.

3. Hopeful Aspects of the Chinese Situation

If there have been great changes in China in recent months, and constantly increasing difficulties for Chinese Christians, there are also grounds for hope and confidence. First, there is the fact that a living Church exists in China, and makes its witness, though facing opposition and misunderstanding, and working within severe limitations. It must be remembered that the Government's concern about the Church arises largely from the fact that the Church and Christian institutions are fairly well organised and are probably the only corporate bodies in China not already completely under Government control. It is a testimony to the importance of Christianity in China that the new Government has been so concerned to swing it into the party line.

Because of the organisation of Christian bodies at the local and national level, it has been comparatively easy for the Government to exert pressure at the strategic spots. Thus what was once regarded as a strength and advantage now becomes a source of embarrassment and difficulty for the organised Church. But while one has to record many instances of apparent defeat for individual Christians and for the Church under extremely clever Government methods, there is also a measure of resurgence of Church activity in places where life had apparently almost died out. There is evidence to justify hope that in parts of Manchuria and North China, where land reform has perhaps been completed, that Christians who at one time were unable to meet, or feared to meet, for worship are once again having services. And probably more significant for the future life of the Church in China is the fact that such sects as the Little Flock, and some other indigenous groups, are meeting in large numbers in some of the cities and carrying on vigorous evangelistic work. There is therefore ground for hope about the present and future life of the Church in China, and considerable evidence to strengthen our faith that the Holy Spirit is now, as always, at work in the hearts of men, and specially those facing humanly insuperable difficulties and temptations.

4. "Judge not, that ye be not Judged"

Many Christians in the West are bound to have a feeling of disappointment and distress, arising not from the testing of circumstances but from certain failures in the way the Chinese Church has met them. Realising that the Church which has had to face such deep-searching trials is one which has just now "come of age",

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and is making grave decisions for the first time completely on its own, and remembering also the tremendous mistakes which have been made from time to time by Churches in the West, is it surprising if there have been serious errors? "Judge not, that ye be not judged"? We are called neither to condone nor to condemn. It is our duty to try, through sympathy and with realism, to understand what has happened.

Responsible Chinese Christians have repeatedly declared that, whatever happens they will remain true to the Christian faith, and loyal to their Lord. In this they expect, and deserve, that we shall implicitly trust them. If this were not in their hearts, they would have already left the Church, for Chinese are especially quick at sensing and sizing up a situation, and their growing trials have not taken them unawares. There has perhaps been too much optimism about the nature of the religious freedom guaranteed to "the people" (i.e. those with full citizenship rights) by the Common Political Platform. All have been convinced of the Church's need to establish in the eyes of the Government its patriotism and progressive political stand. The relation of Christianity to privileges granted under the Unequal Treaties has gravely compromised and embarrassed Chinese Christians, and made them the more ready to repudiate Mission connections. Some of the charges of "imperialism" levelled against the missionary movement have in fact been based upon a measure of real truth. However, it cannot be denied that some Chinese Christian workers have been too ready to dissociate themselves from the missionary movement, and too ready to acquiesce in indictments of the missionary as a political agent or even a spy. The actual failure in Christian love which has appeared to them in the guise of political necessity has been a sin against truth as well as against fellowship, the results of which must be more serious for the Chinese Church than for those whom they have repudiated. But the situation has not appeared to them as it has to us. Perhaps one day it will.

We must not in any way fail or seem to fail, in love. Yet how terribly have Christians in the West failed in Christian love during a time of war. And under a Communist-inspired regime, there is always a war psychology, whether there is actual fighting or not. To the Chinese Church it seemed as if the defence of the missionary cause was politically indefensible; they were entirely right in realising that the missionary would have to leave the country anyway and they did not wish to make their stand on what seemed to them to be political and not religious grounds. The error has been one of judgment, rather than of principle: if it should seem to us that greater Christian love and a keener sense of truth would have saved our brethren from this failure, it is all the more essential that we ourselves pray, not only for them, but also that we may be delivered from a like failure in our turn. Let us continue to trust our friends; they have not ceased to trust us.

How can we help?

In all material and outward ways we must accept the "hands off" policy imposed by the Government and fully accepted perforce by the Chinese Church. No official messages, not even greetings should be sent from Western Church bodies to the Chinese Churches. Charges of espionage are based on such slender "evidence" as correspondence with foreigners of anti-Communist sympathies. For the time-being our Chinese friends have to face their problems entirely alone; we cannot help but we can easily hurt them. Let us surround and support them, then, by prayer; trust them, not blindly or sentimentally, but as imperfect Christians like ourselves.

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II.

THE CHURCH IN YUGOSLAVIA

(from a correspondent)

The Government recently extended social security benefits to include priests and religious workers. The general scheme includes free medical, disablement, old-age and other benefits under the State social insurance programme. Clergymen of all recognised religions may be socially insured if the heads of their respective Churches sign a contract with the Federal Council for Public Health and Social Welfare. According to the scheme, the insured clergymen will be treated as employees of religious communities under the pension programme. The insurance will be financed partly by the State and partly by contributions from Church congregations. It was announced that not only clergymen but their families "will be entitled to financial provision in case of temporary inability or lasting diminished ability for work, to invalid, old-age and family pensions, to financial assistance for children, and to funeral expenses".

In some provinces some priests and pastors have not yet received ration cards and must procure supplies on the expensive (4 to 1) free market. Most of these leaders have not joined the People's Front, a fact interpreted by local officials as indicating lack of confidence in, or opposition to, the Government. A good number of village priests (Orthodox) have taken up lay work in small industries, schools, cooperatives or farms to support their families. Few have quit the ministry.

Religious education is permitted in public schools in some areas, in others it is not organised even in private premises. Permission for instruction may be given on request. Apparently, the general policy is to permit organised instruction rather than clash with the Churches, but to do away with it wherever and as rapidly as possible. Final decision in such matters is therefore taken locally, depending on local demands.

Churches in Slovenia receive financial subsidies from the Government as, to a lesser degree, do some groups in Croatia. The Federal Government is obviously trying to decentralise authority in most internal affairs, including religion. Many of the incidents between religious groups and local government representatives spring from the misdirected zeal of local Communists which exceeds that of Belgrade officials and official policy. (The 500,000 Communists in Yugoslavia are not nearly adequate to staff foreign legations, police, army, education, press, Government, industry, etc.). Cases of provincial misunderstanding and conflict between Churches and Government have been carried to Belgrade authorities (Commission on Religious Affairs) where they have been resolved with, if anything, more sympathy towards the Churches than towards local Government officials. The Commission on Religious Affairs is shortly to be replaced by a Government Ministry.

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Churches in Slovenia receive financial subsidies from the Government as, to a lesser degree, do some groups in Croatia. The Federal Government is obviously trying to decentralise authority in most internal affairs, including religion. Many of the incidents between religious groups and local government representatives spring from the misdirected zeal of local Communists which exceeds that of Belgrade officials and official policy. (The 500,000 Communists in Yugoslavia are not nearly adequate to staff foreign legations, police, army, education, press, Government, industry, etc.). Cases of provincial misunderstanding and conflict between Churches and Government have been carried to Belgrade authorities (Commission on Religious Affairs) where they have been resolved with, if anything, more sympathy towards the Churches than towards local Government officials. The Commission on Religious Affairs is shortly to be replaced by a Government Ministry.

In the Orthodox Church there are 3 major foci:

(a) the older bishops, who waver between pro-Government sympathies with a view to restoring the State-Church, and opposition to the Government for its economic and political reforms and restrictions on former concessions;

(b) the younger priests and a bishop in the Union of Orthodox Clergy - loyal to the Church, supporting certain Government measures of reconstruction and reform, and mildly opposing episcopal despotism;

(c) the "Pray to the Lord" movement of reform, renewal and Bible study among laymen - very strong and very active.

In spite of very differing positions on political issues, the Church still holds together.

Most effective religious work is done in the home, in some Sunday catechetical classes, in liturgical choirs, family feast days and the religious calendar - prayer book. The constant renewal and most active evangelisation of the Church springs from the "Pray to the Lord" movement.

A sign of Government relaxation of restrictive measures on religion, and of greater security of the people is the falling off of Church attendance! The Government is at present tempted to use the Churches' good relations with the West for political and economic gains - e.g., a Church representative was sent to Switzerland to recruit Church delegates for the Yugoslavian Peace Congress in September. The Churches wobble in trying to find a way over unexplored territory led by inexperienced guides. They would welcome:

(a) counsel from Church statesmen experienced with similar delicate Church-State relations, which would help them see broader implications of their situation;

(b) Churches abroad interpreting to Government leaders the full meaning and positive role of the Church in society;

(c) strong indications of fellowship and concern;

(d) the solidarity of all Churches with them in prayer.

They remind us particularly that the refugee interpretation of the situation may be inaccurate and that the Roman Catholic interpretation is a lie: "If the people had their way, Stepinac would be hanged".

The situation is improving fast - so fast as to be dangerous unless the greatest degree of Church statesmanship, in and out of Yugoslavia, is exercised.

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III.

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS OF THE DIVISION BETWEEN EAST AND WEST IN EUROPE AS SEEN IN AUSTRIA

(From a correspondent)

Austria is the only one of the East/West divided lands where intercourse, for the native at least, is undisturbed. Austrians can and do travel all over their country, administer it from the capital, and regard it as one land. It is like a human body, and though afflicted with debility at one end, congestion of the lungs at the other, and internal disorder somewhere else, is nevertheless still one body, with one brain.

This seems to me to have some religious implications. Western Austrians tend to feel pity for Eastern Austrians, as people with a shorter run of freedom before them. It is however pity for the future, pity as for the condemned, and is not concerned with the precariously equal conditions of the present. This shows up sharply in the concern of Austrian churchmen for children. Fear of the effect of the Eastern pattern of living on them - in the future - brings sharp reactions. For whereas most West Austrian Christians probably believe that their East Austrian fellows - the adults among them, that is - will keep their faith, they see at once that most of their children, in the present trend, will not keep it, and that their children's children will never even taste it.

Another implication which is a religious one would seem to be that the Church in Austria faces a dilemma of allegiances. All Churches face some problem of how far they should go along with the secular Government - how interpret the "render unto Caesar". The Church in Austria, however, is bedevilled with two Caesars. Where - I am convinced - it would take the moral leadership in the call for restitution (or institution) of human rights for refugees, were this a cause to be pleaded to one Government with one set of moral standards, it fails completely to do so to two more or less opposing secular masters, each quite passably moral by its own standards but without common criteria.

We criticise the Austrian Protestant Church, for example, for not taking a more active part in nursing the diaspora Churches and in directly ministering to refugees of other lands in other tongues. But to do this, in any big way, is to appear to be fostering criminal and reactionary elements in blatant insult to an Allied power that liberated Austria, and that controls the territory whereon the Austrian Church has its head, and from which it draws much of its sustenance. Yet not to do this seems - to the other three Allied powers who also liberated Austria - immoral, vacillating, weak. These two assessments of one action are exactly contrary, and yet both, from the assessor's point of view, entirely right.

Austria has an old law, dating from the time when her Empire had Mohammedans in its southern part and Moravian Brethren in its north, of religious tolerance. Any Church with adherents in Austria may by law function there. But since such minority groups are almost always Protestant, and the country is a Roman Catholic one, no effort is made to implement that law, nor, if a minority Church invokes that law, will a religiously opposed Austrian Government risk the least displeasure

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of its military masters by standing up for it. Soviet authorities know this perfectly well, and can counter any inclination on the part of the Austrian Protestants to help the refugee Orthodox by curtailing the effective freedom of the Austrian Protestants - in the East zones - to help their own people.

The foregoing implications are all harmful ones: there are good implications too in the situation, and these should not be overlooked.

There is a certain missionary zeal about Church life in the East zones, absent in the more enervating West. They prove able to do more, and with less. They are becoming nodal points of free thinking in districts where thought is decreasing in popularity. Their numbers are being thinned, and their quality purified, by the thought of the tribulation that is not now extant, but is undoubtedly to come.

In the West zones, there is a certain desperate anxiety to be able to identify Western life and criteria with Christianity, in contrast to a pagan East, only to be grimly stultified by the facts. But children in the West zones are being brought up to regard all that is done in the East as automatically evil. They only have to comprehend that to their parents a thing is evil, and for them it is evil too, probably for ever. Dreadful and uncountable prejudices are thus being solidly planted.

One overall remark might be worth adding, that most Protestant Churchmen seem to be clearsighted enough still to separate their religious beliefs from their political passions. From this claim one must specifically exclude the Hungarian refugees, who do not see that distinction, but it still in the main stands.

As yet, not even the Austrian of the Eastern zones takes the division imposed on him as being applicable to his religion. His politics are nowhere near his religion - yet. But all the symptoms are there.

IV.

NEW PRESSURES ON THE CHURCH IN EASTERN GERMANY

(From a correspondent)

1. Official tolerance with two exceptions.

The present spiritual weather report from the East Zone speaks about thaw in the relation between Government and Church. That is to say, at the top level the general atmosphere is at present rather favourable.

As an illustration: The Politbureau of the Socialist Unity Party was reported to have instructed Eastern German authorities to show a friendly attitude towards the Churches, particularly the Evangelical Church.

Some months ago Premier Grotewohl advised the Brandenburg Government to continue paying State subsidies to the Berlin-Brandenburg Church management. It is said that leading "progressive" clergymen who were supposed to become key figures

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in the Communist-projected "People's Church" in the Soviet Zone, are no longer enjoying Communist backing and have officially resigned their posts in the Evangelical Church.

For several months, Church authorities had been trying to dismiss the pastors for disciplinary reasons, but had not succeeded because the local Government opposed their dismissal and paid the clergymen from State funds. This conspicuous change in top level policy must probably be seen against the background of the East German propaganda for German unity. In this campaign the D.D.R. (German Democratic Republic, official title of the East German Government) feels perhaps that it could use the support of the Church.

There have been ups and downs in the relations. They were down a year ago when the Church refused to back up the propaganda drive of that period, namely the Peace Movement and issued its own peace statement.

Then relations improved somewhat. But in October, 1950, at the time of the elections in the D.D.R., they deteriorated again. Too many ministers of the Evangelical Church decided not to vote.

The leaders of the D.D.R. are trying out a new approach laying all emphasis on the unity aspect. They obviously feel that the sentiments among German Christians concerning rearmament would serve as a good basis for mobilizing the Church for the official unity campaign. Being against rearmament implies being for unity. Many pastors in the D.D.R. have uttered appreciative remarks about the anti-remilitarization statements of Niemöller's and Heinemann's. Such sentiments could perhaps be widened into attitudes and actions in the name of German unity.

Even the post cards from the D.D.R. propagate the unity line. There is a nice picture of the Wartburg with the following caption: "The Wartburg where Luther created a unified German written language calls us to the unity of Germany".

But there are two religious bodies that have certainly not enjoyed tolerance. The Church does not agree with them dogmatically, but that should not keep the Church from keeping them within her concern. The two religious bodies to date explicitly banned by the Government are the Jehova's Witnesses and the Christian Science Church. Members of the former are now imprisoned in great numbers. It appears perhaps a little strange to a visitor that the official Church has made no attempt to speak up for individual liberty in view of all the arrests. The Christian Science Church was banned in March and Soviet Zone police searched the homes of leading Church members and confiscated Christian Science publications. The Christian Science Church was banned on the pretext that Christian Science violated the law against the practice of medicine without an official license. The leader of the Church is reported to have said that the ban came "as a complete surprise". The Christian Science Church was organised in Germany in 1891. It was banned by the Nazi régime in 1941 and many of its members were sent to concentration camps. In this time also the official Evangelical Church refrained from defending those arrested or from criticising the action of the State.

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2. Unofficial difficulties

Although there may be a little thaw at the top, it is undoubtedly very cold and near the freezing point down at the grass roots. Locally the situation has not improved, rather worsened. Nothing is being done by the authorities in the way of frontal attacks, but official measure and legislation are taking a very firm and unpleasant hold on the individual.

(a) Voices from towns and farms:

The man in the street now really feels the ideological pressure, and if he is a person connected with the Church his suffering is really great. Some parents have had very palpable experiences of political pressure through their children. The children must write the school papers in exactly the right political way with the right political expressions. There are instances where mothers have been requested to hand over their children to training homes of the State. The reason given by the authorities is the same reason often given by the totalitarian authorities of Nazi Germany, namely that the mother in question is not regarded as capable of educating her children. The newly enacted political decree dividing all the East Zone including East Berlin into political cells with weekly political indoctrination meetings leads many to feel that this may mean the disappearance of the last trace of freedom.

There is the reliable story of the mother whose sons had been arrested. For months she did not hear anything from them, was at last told that she could see them once a month. They were in different camps and prisons. The reason for their arrest was that they were suspected of having connection with an underground movement. It was later proved that this was a totally unfounded allegation. Not long ago the three boys were released after several years in prison, one of them suffering from TB.

(b) The increasing pressure on the individual:

As the ideological strait-jacket has been tightened around the individual, the general fear and mistrust has increased. If you have roomers in your house - and you are obliged to if you have an apartment above a certain size - you automatically become extraordinarily careful before you speak.

There is an increasing pressure on everyone in the D.D.R. to join the political organisations. This pressure is felt particularly strongly among young people. The Student Christian Associations and the Junge Gemeinden (Christian youth congregation) have a constantly decreasing number of non-F.D.J. members (Free German Youth, Communist youth organisation). It is reported that in one Junge Gemeinde of about 100 members only 2 do not belong to the F.D.J. Although this may well be rather exceptional, many East Zone Church leaders believe that the percentage of F.D.J. members in Christian student and youth groups is constantly growing. Only in very few cases is there an outright resistance on the part of the members and their leaders to keep F.D.J. members out of the groups. Young people are obviously forced to join the F.D.J. Their parents usually do not discourage them from doing so. But this fact creates a twofold difficulty. First of all, there are few Christian parents in the East Zone who let their children join the F.D.J. without great misgivings and even with a guilty conscience.

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This uneasiness is naturally also transplanted on the children who know very well that they will sooner or later have to be "activists" and say and write things which their conscience does not approve. Secondly, the fact that so many in the Junge Gemeinde and the Studentengemeinde are members of the F.D.J. makes it really impossible to know what exactly you can say and what you should refrain from saying, especially in larger group meetings. Most of the Christian youngsters know where their loyalty lies. But it happens from time to time that a young man or a young woman is asked to report to the party authorities about the discussions in the Christian groups. The request looks fairly innocuous at the outset, but once you are in the claws of the party workers, there is little possibility of getting out. Although it is not always known in the Christian group which of the members have been asked to do such reporting, the knowledge that such reporting is being done, is enough to disturb the spirit of especially larger groups.

On the 18th of April a new system of political cells began in East Berlin and the D.D.R. It is a system of "political seminars". In every block and on every farm the inhabitants are divided into small groups of some 10 or 12 people who are to meet once a week for "political discussion". These groups are led by persons belonging to the party, not necessarily indoctrinated Marxists, but people who in any case cannot afford to deviate from the official teachings. In these political seminars an attempt will now be made at Marxist indoctrination of the East German people. This step has produced a great deal of unrest. It all boils down to the fact that no one is supposed to hold or express opinions at variance with the Marxist views of the Government.

All those who are employed in the so-called "volkseigenen Betriebe", the "enterprises owned by the people", are forced to take part in the activities of the S.E.D. party (Socialist Unity Party, Communist political front). The authorities are naturally mainly interested in the younger people. The younger employees if they are asked to do so, must take part in the preparation for the "World Youth Rally" in Berlin in August. This includes the possibility of being sent to Western Germany as a recruiting agent because it is the intention of the East Zone authorities to whip up considerable emotional enthusiasm for the Berlin meeting among homeless and disgruntled youth in the West.

If you have joined the S.E.D., the F.D.J. or the "Junge Pioniere", you are asked and forced to become a so-called "activist", a person who without protest obeys the orders of the group leaders, not as a person, but as a part of the process.

The only point of view that is now really valid when it comes to the position of an individual is whether or not a person is "technisch-ökonomisch verwertbar", i.e., useful from a technical and economic angle. The individual is evaluated in his capacity as a specialist, an expert. Certain technical specialists, and experts are still in short supply. Consequently the régime will do nothing very radical against them, even though they may be "of the old order" or openly disagree with some Governmental measures.

3. The Christian Response

In a group of exceptionally forward-looking and consecrated lay workers from several walks of life the question was brought up: "As a Christian can you, should you keep silent when facing the increasing ideological rigidity of the State?"

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It was a cry from the depths. For these people who are now voluntarily and with great joy preparing themselves for a lay ministry are permanently facing in their daily lives the tension between Christian demands for truth and a slogan-filled Marxist orthodoxy.

Some Christians, quite understandably, refer to present conditions in the East Zone as the work of the Devil. They speak of the dehumanisation of human relations. They refuse to accept the allegation that the incipient Communist structure of the East Zone is carried by a "Mythos". It is not a question of a Mythos, they say, it is simple brutal, naked power bearing down upon defenceless victims.

Time and again you hear Christian people interpret the happenings in the East Zone in this manner and it is hard to see how else you could interpret the immediate measures now taken by the State. The deeper question whether there is a judgment of God hidden in these events is something which can only be discussed on a different level, from a Christian-philosophical point of view, as an interesting and perhaps plausible thought experiment in the realm of the history of philosophy. It is the immediate injustice to the human person that concerns us in a concrete situation, whatever the long term intention of God may be.

Here is the way some of the lay Christians of Eastern Germany react:

"As teachers, employers in various enterprises and section leaders in factories we have chosen to keep silent on many issues where we should perhaps have spoken. Our comfort is that we know what is right, because we constantly go back to the Bible and to the Christian Community. But what about the youngsters that are growing up now? Daily reading the ever present signs and posters with political slogans, always being fed with the hateful statements about Western countries? Where do they get their yardsticks? They will probably soon absorb the new teachings and become a lost generation as far as Christian truth and love are concerned."

The prisons and concentration camps are becoming rather populous, peopled mostly with persons accused of "treason against the Volksgemeinschaft". In these prisons the behaviour and opinions of the prisoners is evaluated at regular intervals according to approximately the same kind of point system as is being used in connection with the political examinations of students. If someone has accumulated a certain number of points, he may be released earlier than the original sentence foresaw. Today in the Eastern Zone a wife is waiting for her husband who was imprisoned for the second time (he had also been in prison under the Nazis). The Party has pointed out to her that it is quite possible that her husband may be released earlier than his sentence, if she agrees to act as a "rapporteur" in certain circles. When she comes to the pastor and puts her dilemma before him, what should the word of the Church be? There is hardly any casuistic law to be applied with equal stringency all over the Zone. Of course there are Church people who say: "Let us take our stand now, let us work out the strict rules now. Beware, this is only one way by which the devil is trying to infiltrate his lies into the Church." And yet when you come down to the individual case, like this woman, how are we to determine what answer she should give? Perhaps it is as one leader from the East Zone Church said: "It is our lot to feel permanently guilty. Maybe this is a fundamental Christian attitude, but it certainly takes its toll of our spirit."

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As soon as we talk about the Christian responsibility for society, the East Zone friends retort: "We cannot influence this system" and yet they naturally agree that Christ has died for all, even for the most wicked. This is the dilemma in the totalitarian situation. The question arises for a Christian: "Is it my main job to hibernate within small closed groups and communities?" One meets Christians with evangelistic zeal who say that it is always possible to find persons at the working place who are easily approachable with the Gospel. It is only a question of looking for these people. The political atmosphere has made them afraid of any open remarks. One of the Christian leaders states: "It is my belief that irrespective of the political systems, there are always some people waiting for me at the side of my road into the future and wanting my Christian companionship just as much as I want theirs."

There is also involved in this problem the old question about Law and Gospel. What does it mean in this particular context to give to Caesar his due? If for the sake of your family, for the sake of your very material existence you decide to comply with the political system, is that not a situation into which the Gospel of grace really speaks? Or is that a situation into which because of our human weakness we tell ourselves that the Gospel of grace speaks? Perhaps we are trying to reverse the whole message by not giving the Law its rightful place. These are questions which return time and again to the minds and souls of our fellow-Christians in the East Zone. These are also existential questions which really lie at the root of our own Western existence, yet we may not know it.

Sometimes life among Christians becomes genuinely einfach, genuinely simple, and that is the case among most of the Christians from the East Zone. There is less room than before for endeavours to impress with personal grandeur, institutional standing and high-sounding titles. There is a very noticeable simple closeness to life itself and a very beneficial simple humanity. There is definitely less of an emphasis on the kind of glory and the kind of yardsticks that the Church constantly borrows from the world. Christians in the East only wish that it would not be allied with so much inner agony.

V.

PROFESSOR HROMADKA IN BERLIN

(From a correspondent)

In April Professor Hromadka spoke at the Humboldt University (in the Soviet Sector of Berlin) at the invitation of the theological faculty. The visit had come as a surprise to most Christians in Berlin. In February 1951 at the time of the World Peace Congress many Church people in Berlin knew that Professor Hromadka was in their city, but on that occasion he had not been in touch with Church people. This time his visit was designed to contact Christians.

The lecture which Professor Hromadka gave at the Humboldt University is given in outline notes as follows. Even if the notes are essentially correct remember that there is a long and cumbersome way from Czech via German into English.

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Professor Hromadka at the Humboldt University
in Berlin on the 13th April 1951

The general subject was "The Christian in today's world".

"These times of ours are full of violent tension. I personally also stand in the tension. My lecture today is more confession and witness than abstract theology.

To make that clearer, I would like to point at a few items from my own personal theology.

1. The Lordship of Jesus Christ as King

We have in Czechoslovakia a tradition beginning from Hus and up to Comenius. That means that the theological question of the justification through faith did not come into our thinking from the very beginning as a first point as in the Lutheran Church.

2. The Church as the tool of this Lordship

We too naturally know the congregation or Christian community as the community of justified sinners, but in the first place the Church to us is the instrument of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

3. Distrust in relation to the world

Our tradition speaks more of this distrust than Luther, but it also gives us at the same time a sense of responsibility in relation to the State. We always had on the one hand a certain reticence, on the other hand also precisely because of this reticence a considerable courage in relation to the State.

4. The unity of the reformation

Our thinking about the contribution of the reformation has always been very inclusive, not exclusive. The Brüder-Unität, the Moravian Communion, has always been very open to the reforming contributions by Luther, Bucer and Calvin.

Then I would also like to add that we are a minority Church with all what that means negatively and positively.

It must also be said that you find with us a certain discontinuity between the Church of today and the reformation period. You have in between the Josephinian period. Hence we may very well in many respects be rather superficial, but I also think that we are flexible. All this you will probably notice in my lecture.

We live between the times and we all live under one roof.

In this situation we must pose the question: Are the old Church fathers and the reformation sufficient for us?

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Everything which was brought to us from the old Church fathers and the reformation can and shall serve as a road sign but not as a Maginot Line.

The historical confessions created history in the past, but their importance has after all only been provisional.

I must add immediately that the Church struggle during the last war and the ecumenical movement have meant much to us. The Church struggle has meant much to us in Czechoslovakia and influenced our thinking and our actions. The ecumenical movement which is driving to discover the deepest reality in Christ's Lordship does not mean a reduction to a minimum, but a striving to discover the fulness of the confessing universal Church. But to confess is always actual concrete and existential.

We must never tire in our endeavours to interpret the confessions anew. The confessions are covenants and always point forward. That you can see very clearly in the statement of 18 March 1936 where the German Confessing Church offers a declaration over the Church on the move.

The time of the Church and the time of the world is not the same. But this does not permit us to fall into a docetic thinking. The essence of the Church has always to do with the world.

It remains for us to return to the places where God's word really burns. The confessions may be an obstacle. We must learn to distinguish between the important and the unimportant parts of the various confessions. Ours is a time when one necessarily has to go back to the sources, further back than the reformation, further back than the Church fathers, down to the history of the Old Testament. For instance, we must study and learn the history of Abraham in a new way.

From the history of Abraham we may learn that political changes are also changes which concern the Church. We have become a-political (as above, I only speak here about conditions in my own Church and my own country). But it is also a kind of politics to be a-political. We live in this world whether we like it or not. The Church has adjusted itself to the world to a great extent. Yardsticks which are fundamentally alien to the Church have been accepted in the Church and she knew it not. I must repeat, I speak about us in Czechoslovakia. That is existential theological thinking. We were once upon a time looking at the problems of the world from the angle of the philosophy of history. But history itself marched past us. And some people immediately after 1918 were fascists. History marched past both the nice liberal philosophers of history and these fascists.

Today we have really to grapple with history as it is. We have put aside the philosophies of history as children's games because we discovered that there was no chance for us any more to escape history. History in effect came too close to us.

These two things are of greatest importance:

(a) back to the burning word and

(b) to see the history of our days as brutal and naked as it is.

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(b) to see the history of our days as brutal and naked as it is.

Back to the burning word, to Moses, Abraham, Joshua and the witnesses of the resurrection, much further back than a lot of present day theology regards as necessary.

But to see the history of our days in its brutal vitality, in its naked brutality, that can only be done in faith.

My friends of the schools of the history of philosophy have all kinds of objections against this thesis.

I like them very much, they are my friends and they are good philosophers, but they cannot see this fact that history has simply come very close to our lives, so close that we cannot escape it. These friends live under old yardsticks and they are very much hurt when in some way or other history strikes at them.

But I venture to say that this attitude of not taking a stand is in itself a political decision. They themselves are naturally not aware of the fact that they are driven by real political motives. They are slaves of politics without knowing it.

Four years ago I took a clear political stand, made myself free from false politics. My friends rebuked me at that time. They said that I was not a theologian, but a politician. I always answered them that they politizised, not I. I did not say so because I thought that my stand ought to be norm-giving, but I think that we all need the courage to see history as it really is.

This is the time of dissolution. We have at long last behind us - and I still speak about Czechoslovakia - all the monarchies and the liberal democracies. I was a liberal democrat after the first world war and there was a great deal of socialist conviction in my faith in democracy. I had expected much from the liberal democracies and the socialist countries: Italy, France, England and the U.S.A., but they all failed. They won the war and lost the peace. They have lost their creative vitality.

Also the socialist reformism is in a difficult situation. Its weaknesses are very alarming.

Into this situation comes Communism.

It comes with the ideals of:

social change,
liberation for the colonial peoples,
the desire to bridge the gulfs between the peoples.

That which happens today under the sign of Communism must be regarded by us Christians in the stillness of faith.

We must put the question to ourselves: Is Communism the apex of dissolution or the beginning of the reconstruction?

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There are some with us who say: What we are now living through is simply a symbol of dissolution. Only afterwards comes something else and better.

We cannot solve this question intellectually. I believe it is always a matter for our faith. In this context we should not make any false analogies. There is a great danger here. For instance, one makes the great mistake of comparing our period with the years 1933-45. That is impossible. The situation 1945-50 is quite different. If one does not see that, one is probably on the road that leads to catastrophe.

In this way the truth about the history of our days is veiled.

The word of God on the one hand and the events within creation on the other is never the same. But where the living word of God has spoken, where we have looked the events straight in the face, there we have at least the possibility of a relatively accurate decision.

Europe has been shoved aside. Is not the reason hidden in the fact that the Churches of Europe failed? How did it get so far? Why do we not have instead of Communism, say, German Socialism or French or English Socialism?

I believe that we as theologians know the answer to that question better than the politicians or the philosophers.

How did it ever get so far that the colonial peoples are all against us?

When we speak about Russian Communism, we identify it with "the East". But we must keep in mind that Russian Communism of today is an occidentalisation of Russian culture.

The dream in Russia has always been the West. Inside the brutal Marxism, within its wrestling for reality you can find a universalistic desire expressed by figures like Tolstoi and even Dostojewski. It is a question of a devotedness to the human person and the Russian longing for the stars.

Here we as Christians are placed before a decision. I must say about myself personally that what I do I do as a believer and theologian.

We must before all take seriously the dissolution in which the world finds itself and then we must look history in the face and understand what it says. If not, we shall become the slaves of history.

The Church must demythologise faith - I am naturally no Bultmannist -, demythologise faith away from dead tradition and superstition.

We must put faith against mythos and religion and all kinds of philosophies. Here we have a question of whether or not we want to wrestle with the burning word of God.

The Church must identify itself with the depraved world. This is simply what the death and the resurrection of Christ mean.

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Jesus Christ was no school master. He carried the world with its burden and sin and suffering. The Church should not moralize, not judge.

Only in this way the Church will become free from the world. Without identifying itself with the depraved world, the Church becomes the slave of the world. Only through such an identification we shall maintain the freedom of the human being."

A group talked informally with Professor Hromadka about his lecture and about the Christian in the tension between East and West.

Hromadka was questioned about "the dissolution of the liberal and socialist democracies". The way Hromadka had talked about "Auflösung" indicated rather plainly that he was of the opinion that this Auflösung is taking place in the Western world, not in the Eastern. He had conceded that several of his friends among the philosophers of history in Czechoslovakia and other dear liberal friends did not agree with his interpretation of today's history. They were inclined to regard Communism as the apex of dissolution and said that only after this will something constructive come. However, Hromadka on his part as a matter of faith had accepted the on-rush of Marxism and Communism as the "beginning of the constructive". The question was: Can we as Christians "localize" or "geographize" the concept of dissolution? By doing so, do we not force upon ourselves an axiom borrowed from a Marxist arsenal? Hromadka replied that he had had this interesting question put to him some days previously and that it probably was a matter of faith and insight into the events which finally decide what to believe about the dissolution.

There was some discussion of the World Peace Congress. Hromadka maintained that he was a member of the "Peace Congress" without any hesitation and that it was out of conviction that he let himself be appointed to the small commission that has been asked to make representations to the United Nations. He said that he felt the Churches had failed concerning the treatment of Communist China. Communist China in Hromadka's view should have been permitted to join the United Nations. If that had happened, there probably would have been no war in Korea. Hromadka also felt that the Churches had done too little or nothing to get the four big powers together in the interest of future peace. Some members of the group retorted that the steps taken by the Government in the East Zone went against all public proclamations about the freedom of the individual. They spoke about heuchlerei, hypocrisy, as the prevailing attitude of the increasingly totalitarian East Zone régime. All the nice peace phrases were conscious hypocrisy. Hromadka was asked whether it had occurred to him that he was being used by the totalitarian régime in his own country and also used in connection with the Peace Congress. They said that it was precisely because the Church of Germany sensed the real risk of being used that she decided to proclaim her own message about peace. Hromadka answered that he could speak only about Czechoslovakia and out of his experiences there. Conditions like the ones his German friends had described did not exist to the same degree in Czechoslovakia.

Concerning the possibility that he may be used both by politicians in his own country and by politics behind the Peace Congress, Hromadka simply said that that is of course always the risk with which each one has to count. As a Christian

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A group talked informally with Professor Hromadka about his lecture and about the Christian in the tension between East and West.

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There was some discussion of the World Peace Congress. Hromadka maintained that he was a member of the "Peace Congress" without any hesitation and that it was out of conviction that he let himself be appointed to the small commission that has been asked to make representations to the United Nations. He said that he felt the Churches had failed concerning the treatment of Communist China. Communist China in Hromadka's view should have been permitted to join the United Nations. If that had happened, there probably would have been no war in Korea. Hromadka also felt that the Churches had done too little or nothing to get the four big powers together in the interest of future peace. Some members of the group retorted that the steps taken by the Government in the East Zone went against all public proclamations about the freedom of the individual. They spoke about hewchlereí, hypocrisy, as the prevailing attitude of the increasingly totalitarian East Zone régime. All the nice peace phrases were conscious hypocrisy. Hromadka was asked whether it had occurred to him that he was being used by the totalitarian régime in his own country and also used in connection with the Peace Congress. They said that it was precisely because the Church of Germany sensed the real risk of being used that she decided to proclaim her own message about peace. Hromadka answered that he could speak only about Czechoslovakia and out of his experiences there. Conditions like the ones his German friends had described did not exist to the same degree in Czechoslovakia.

Concerning the possibility that he may be used both by politicians in his own country and by politics behind the Peace Congress, Hromadka simply said that that is of course always the risk with which each one has to count. As a Christian

or a theologian he felt an eternal vigilance is required. But he added that this vigilance would also be very appropriate for Christians in the Western world.

The question about "identification with the depraved world" was also raised. Hromadka maintained that by being loyal to and having identified himself with the system in Czechoslovakia, he had really taken a step whereby he became free. On the other hand, those Christians in Czechoslovakia who still thought that they were only spectators were in fact very much politically engaged. Because by refusing to face the historical events and accepting these events as sign-posts they were subconsciously still captured in the old ideas and patterns of a liberal world, the basis of which has already broken.

Hromadka did not believe, he said, in the socialist paradise of the believing Communist of his own country. He had had opportunities to discuss this question with his friends among the Communists and he had told them quite frankly that he naturally faced the idea of a paradise of perfect social conditions as a Christian and theologian, and as a Christian and theologian he must tell them that their views on man and on this world were far less realistic than the views of the Bible. Not long ago he had had such a discussion publicly with a leading Communist and his contributions had been received with a great deal of respect, although they did not tally with the Communist's contributions. " As a theologian I know that man is a sinful creature and that utopias cannot be built by men."

17, route de Malagnou, Geneva,
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VI.

THE CHURCHES AND THE PEACE PLEBISCITE IN THE EASTERN ZONE OF GERMANY JUNE 3,1951

"Are you against the re-militarisation of Germany and for the conclusion of a peace-treaty during 1951?". This is the question which has completely filled people's minds ever since May. Nothing else has been discussed in the press, in the weekly lectures held in State institutions, banks, and shops, or in the civics lessons given in the schools. In the cinemas enthusiastic speakers urged the audience (before the film began) to oppose the war and get rid of the war-mongers (e.g. Adenauer, etc.) Ulbrich and Pieck wrote fiery articles on the same line, in the film magazines; and the films produced in Russia or Eastern Germany urged people to ally themselves with China and the heroic Koreans in loyalty to "the leader who is leading all peoples towards freedom and happiness" and "to defend peace to the utmost". Families received numerous visits from representatives of the "National Front" or the "Peace Committee", to persuade them to vote "yes". Some representatives carried emblems of peace such as doves or posters depicting the success of the Five-year Plan, to be hung on the walls of the home. Speakers held forth in public places and collected signatures.

In many apartments, "house peace committees" were started, meeting every week to discuss the problem of maintaining peace. Factories, offices, trade unions and,in one case, whole villages bound themselves to go to the poll all together to vote "openly and honourably" for peace. This propaganda was effectively followed up by a reduction of prices in the State shops and by a considerable improvement in the status of the "technical intelligentsia" and the doctors. This proved completely successful, from the Communist point of view. Far more votes were cast for the Communist position than at the previous election in October, 1950; a large proportion of the population had already promised their votes weeks beforehand. There are various reasons for the success of this campaign. The Germans have never had much political insight, and fear blinds people to the truth. Furthermore, most people felt much less strongly than last October the shame of such a caricature of a political decision, and voted this time with careless resignation. They had even accustomed themselves to the idea of 16 year-olds voting! Since a year ago, most people have become impregnated with fear and they no longer regard an election as a chance to defend a tiny scrap of justice and freedom. A great many people have lost the habit of asking themselves what justice, truth or freedom are.

On Sunday morning the young people danced and sang in front of the voting booths, and in the evening everyone was invited to celebrate the day by dancing and drinking. And it all went off according to plan. In the morning hundreds of voters were waiting patiently for the hour to strike, when they could cast their votes for "the most essential contribution to the realisation of God's Kingdom on Earth" (to quote one of the more pious slogans of Communist-dominated Christian Democratic Union of the Eastern Zone.

Thirty pastors (not representative of the attitude of the official Church) had urged people to vote "Yes". Few people knew the background of these pastors. One had been pensioned off after a nervous breakdown in 1946: another had been dismissed from the Church on account of his matrimonial affairs; a third had escaped to the Western Zone but had not been allowed by the Church authorities there to remain, and had been obliged to return in fear and trembling. These "shop-window pastors" were widely quoted in the daily newspapers. Extracts

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from Niemoller's speeches and even from one of Dibelius' sermons were quoted in order to prove that both of them were fighting for true peace under the leadership of Stalin! In Saxony nearly all the pastors seem to have voted, but not in Brandenburg and Province Sachsen, where the Church leaders had published their warnings against this plebiscite.

Most of the Church-goers out of fear of arrest went with the stream. But a small minority held aloof. In many Churches the political dilemma was discussed in an open way. In several Churches the Church leaders sent a memo to the Government analysing the form and the content of the plebiscite and showing how impossible it was. This memo was sent to all the parishes and was discussed in Bible classes of laymen and in pastors' conferences.

Special Communist representatives of a more educated type were chosen to visit the pastors. Sometimes these visits took a different turn from that intended by the other side and in the exchange of views the Communist representatives have been reported as going away with a new understanding of why Christians could not take part in the plebiscite, and a new insight into the meaning of the Christian recognition of God as the only supreme authority and His laws as unchangeable. Christians are beginning to learn from such encounters that they must not through lack of love and out of fear obstruct the message of Christ which is intended for the Communist too. The Communists live in great fear and sometimes they are grateful when someone helps to lift the mist of propaganda and they are able to find relief from the oppressive burden of having to lie. Every bit of confidence between men that grows in such moments is a blow at their methods and their ethos!

To complete the picture we must point out places of danger for the future. Pastors are now literally the only people who are not directly dependent for income upon the Communist régime and who are to some extent protected against denunciations and police measures. The Communists want to avoid a repetition of the "Church Struggle". But Christians in ordinary occupations are sharply attacked if they express free opinions. Teachers are dismissed and replaced by younger ones trained in Communist ideas. The general policy is to isolate the pastors; the Marxists count on the continual nerve-strain to lead ultimately to their spiritual breakdown. The Church-goer can find pleasure in hearing a courageous sermon, but too few of them are prepared to practise what they hear. Thus, the political crisis makes deep spiritual demands upon the pastors.

So far the new edition of the "German Christian" movement is only a caricature of the old one, though the Communist party is making every endeavour to fill this gap. Much more dangerous is the fact that many Christians take the attitude of Christian-German nationalist bourgeoisie pressed to the wall, failing to realise that the political clock cannot be turned backward, and that no "Western" solution can be found. We must face squarely the problems raised by Communism (and for which Communism provides such false solutions).